THE EXAMINATION, confeſsion, and condemnation of *Henry Robſon* *Fiſherman of* Rye, *who poyſoned his* wife in the ſtrangeſt maner that euer hitherto hath bin heard of.

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The Epistle to the Reader.

GEntle Readers, amongst all the cruell Stratagems, poysonings and homicides, I haue here described one, which in my iudgement passeth all that euer were inuented; together with Gods prouidence in bringing it to light. And the sooner haue I penned it, that others may beware of being deceiued by Sathan to doe the like, in hope it shall be concealed.

L. B.

The examination, confeſsion, and *condemnation of* Henry Robſon *Fiſher*-man of *Rye*, who poyſoned his wife in the ſtrangeſt maner that euer hither-to hath been heard of.

AT Rye in Suſſex there dwelled a man whoſe name was Henrie Robſon, by trade he vſed fiſhing, and liued long time in very good eſtimation amongſt his neighbors, till ſuch time as through his lauiſh ſpending, he came greatly in debt, to his vtter ruine. For when Lucifer had found a meanes how to accompliſh his will, he neuer left him, til by his diuiliſh practiſes he had brought him to the gallowes. For hauing liued there, and being happened into the danger of the law, his Creditors began to put him in ſuite: whom when he could no waies ſatiſfie, he was cast into priſon, where he long time remained languiſhing in woe. This Robſon had a wife, who for her honeſt

dealing a good neighbourhood, was greatly beloued both of yong and old. And although she could no waies redeeme him, yet did she relieue him in such sort by her diligent labor, that each one wondered at her indeuour: yet neuertheless, he little weighed neither her kindnes nor the lawes of God, as hereafter shall manifestly appeare: but deuised continually how he might make her away: who being dead, he determined to sell al that euer he could make, and being redeemed out of prison, to haue conuaied himselfe ouer into the Low Countries, and there to haue liued.

Whilest these mischieuous thoughts harboured in his minde, the deuell stirred vp the minde of one Glasier, being then in prison, to be an instrument to put this his villanie in practise: who one day finding a fit opportunitie, he thus began. Faith Harry I am sorie to see thee liue thus in prison, and hast been so well beloued in this towne. Tush Glasier (sayd this Robson) tis too late now to bee sorie, when there is no remedie: for so long as my wife liueth, it is vnpossible that euer I should come out. Faith then said Glasier) sure if my wifes death could procure my libertie, I would neuer be in bondage, or imprisoned. No (sayd Robson) why my wishes can neuer the sooner procure her death. I but (said the other) your indeuour may, with-

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out being once ſuſpected: and if you will take my counſell and be ſecret, I will warrãt you ſhe ſhall not long liue. Which words, when Robſon heard, greatly reioycing at this good hap, he not onely vowed to be ſecret, but alſo to put this in ſpeedie execution, and during life to remaine Glaſiers friend, if it ſorted to good effect. In ſhort time after Glaſier was deliuered: at which inſtant Robſon put him in minde of his promiſe, which he promiſed preſently to accompliſh. And haſting downe to one Fiſhers a Mercer in the towne, bought a penniworth of Ratſbane: and comming to the priſon againe, in ſecret he deliuered it to Robſon, willing him to temper it with glaſſe ſmall beaten, and wrapt in the ſkinne of a ſhoulder of mutton, to the quantity of a haſle nut, or leſſe, and in the night when his wife ſhould next come to lie with him, he ſhould conuey it into her priuie parts, which hee would warrãt without danger to him ſhuld kil her: and ſo he departed. O hainous crime and wicked counſell, the like whereof ſince Cain murthered the righteous Abel, hath not been heard of. But now marke the euent: ſome ſeauen daies after his wife (according to her accuſtomed order) came to the priſon, and finding her welbeloued husband, ſhe ſaluted him, toying of his welfare. But he who minded nought els but murther, ſaluted her

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with a dissembling shew of friendship: and at night when she would haue departed, hee constrained her to stay all night, which was the dearest nights pleasure that euer woman had: for in the night hee put in practise his former imaginations: which how it wrought shall hereafter be declared. In the morning without suspect, the poore sillie woman departing home, little thinking her death should so soone approch, falling sicke to her worke, she found her selfe grieued, and her bodie began to swell more and more. For now it began to runne and eate into her vaines, so that with the extreame paine she was constrayned to goe to bed, where she lay languishing some fiue daies. Her neighbours resorting still to comfort her, and many Phisitions were sent for, all which agreed that she was poysoned. And therefore gaue her many purgations, and vsing many other meanes, but all could not serue: for in their liues they had neuer seene nor heard of so strange an accident. When they had vsed all the meanes they could, her daies of life being now finished, she tooke her last adiew of the world, and so dyed. So soone as she was dead, according to the manor, they would haue prepared for her buriall: but the Phisitions hindered their purpose, and hauing obtained licence of the officers, they caused

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her to bee ripped, where they found in euerie baine both glaſſe and Ratſbane, and yet could not deuiſe how or by what meanes it ſhould come thither: for that it could not be, it ſhould there happen by any conueiance in meate or drinke: and therefore they determined to finde out by ſome meanes who was the doer of this villany. And incontinently, ſending to euery ſhop in the towne to know who lately bought any Ratſbane: at the ſayd Fiſhers (aforeſayd) they heard that one Glaſier two weekes before had there bought a penniworth. whereupon they made ſearch for the ſaid Glaſier: but he hauing heard of this newes, and knowing himſelfe guiltie of the crime, was fled away. Then they bethought how Glaſier was then lately returned out of priſon where Robſon was, whoſe wife it was that was poiſoned. And inquiring further when Robſons wife was with him in priſon, they learned that ſhe lay with him in the priſon houſe not full a weeke before. This all being put together, they began to coniecture of the matter: and the Maior, Iurats and Recorder being aſſembled, they ſent for Robſon, who incontinent was brought before them: and being come, the Recorder (one maſter Boulton) began thus.

Neighbour Robſon (ſayd he) we vnderſtand by one Glaſier, that you had certaine poyſon of him which you cauſed him to buy: now wee haue ſent for you to know to what intent you

bought it: for that you are suspected of the death of your wife, and by some manifestly accused. Which he hearing, began to vse many protestations, that he was as ignorant both of any such poyson, or of the deede, as the childe newly borne. Nay (sayd the Recorder) if you be so obstinate, we will bring Glasier forth, who to your shame shal testifie it, and then you are not onely guiltie of the poyson, but also of the act doing: and therefore confesse the truth & shame the deuill. Well (sayd Robson) I had indeede Ratsbane: but what of that? Why didst thou deny it then (sayd the Recorder?) it shewes a guiltie conscience. But what didst thou with it, and to what intent didst thou buy it? Why (sayd he) the Courthouse is full of Rats, and I bought it to kill them. That is not so (said the Recorder) but the deuill is the father of lyers, and I feare thou art his sonne: confesse the trueth what thou didst with it. Well (sayd Robson) if you will needes know, I will truelie resolue you. I haue been long in prison, and I haue often heard that poyson will breake open any iron lock, and therfore I bought it, thinking thereby to get my libertie. Now I haue told the truth I hope you will pardon me. No (sayd the Recorder) thou hast not told ye truth: for with it and glasse mingled together thou didst poyson thy wife: and therefore as thou lookest for any fauour at our hands, confesse how, and in what maner thou didst it, and who

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was thy counſeller in it. Well, then I perceiue (ſayd Robſon) you glut after my blood, and if it will pleaſure you you ſhall haue it. For they hauing told him truth, he could no longer denie it: and therfore imagining that Glaſier was taken and had confeſt al, he openly declared the whole maner aforeſayd, how and in what maner hee had done it, and for what cauſe, and who was his counſeller: which they hearing greatly marueiled. And ſo for that time hee was committed to priſon, where he remained til the Seſſions day, where he was arraigned and condemned, and accoꝛding to the law hee was there adiudged to be hanged, which was perfoꝛmed.

The Lord of his infinit grace graunt euery one better to withſtand Sathans temptations, and eſchew his ſubtilties, that they be not led by his allurements, noꝛ intrapped in his ſnares, who ſeeketh by all meanꝭ to bring euery one to confuſion.

FINIS.